



## HOW TO READ CONTOUR LINES



There are 3 kinds of contour lines you'll see on a map: intermediate, index, and supplementary.

**1. Index lines** are the thickest contour lines and are *usually* labelled with a number at one point along the line. This tells you the elevation above sea level.

**2. Intermediate lines** are the thinner, more common, lines between the index lines. They usually don't have a number label. Typically, one index line occurs for every five intermediate lines.

**3. Supplementary lines** appear as dotted lines, indicating flatter terrain.

If you're looking at an index line, it's easy to read the elevation because it is clearly labelled. However, interval lines are somewhat trickier. To determine their elevation, you'll need to know the contour intervals. Contour intervals tell you the change in elevation between any two contour lines. You can find the contour interval in the map key, usually located underneath the scale of the map at the bottom centre.

### Meaning of Contour Lines

Index Line



Approximate or indefinite line



Intermediate Line



Approximate or indefinite Line



Supplementary line

